cleared by the Ministry of Environment & Forests;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Kuriarkutty hydro-electric project, as proposed in 1979, was rejected due to its adverse impact on wet evergreen forests in Western Ghats. The resultant reservoir was also expected to affect the Anamalai Game Sanctuary.

**Visits of high powered official team to Switzerland**

@843. SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of high powered official teams visited Switzerland during the past three years to investigate into US $ 40 million paid by Bofors as kickbacks;

(b) whether any of these teams had discussions with representatives and officials of the Swiss Division of International Assistance and Police Matters, Swiss National Bank and the Swiss Federal Banking Commission; and

(c) what are the conclusions drawn by Government on the reports and discussions these teams had in Switzerland?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (DR. RAJA RAMANNA): (a) Investigating officials have visited Switzerland to enquire into this case on several occasions.

(b) Some of these teams had discussions with the officers of the Federal Department of Justice and Police of the Government of Switzerland and certain Swiss Banks.

(c) No definite conclusions can be drawn till the investigations have been completed.

**Raising to age limt of women to join Government Services**

844. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to raise the age limit for women to join Government service to help them achieve economic independence; and

(b) if so, the details of the proposal and how soon it would be implemented?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

**Setting up of National Commission on Women**

845. SHRI KAILASH PATI MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a National Commission on women is going to be set up shortly to oversee the whole gamut of legislative, executive and social action with regard to women's issues; and

(b) if so, the terms of reference thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF

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@Previously Unstarred Question 309, transferred from the 15th March, 1990.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (PROF. M. G. K. MENON): (a) and (b) The proposal to set up a National Commission on Women as also its terms of reference is under consideration of the Government.

**Illiteracy among women in the country**

846. SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the percentage of illiteracy among women in the country, what are the new educational opportunities being extended to them for the removal of this large scale illiteracy; and

(b) the state-wise progress made so far in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (PROF. M. G. K. MENON): (a) The illiteracy rate of women in the country according to 1981 census is 75.18 per cent. Some of the strategies initiated to promote women's education throughout the country, with emphasis on rural and tribal areas, include the following:—

(i) Mahalia Samakhya: The basic thrust of this programme is to create mechanisms whereby women are given an opportunity to plan and monitor their own education and reach out to a new body of knowledge. It aims at involving women in the process of educational planning at the village level and providing educational inputs like non-formal education training of school teachers and production of educational material. This project has been launched in 10 districts, 3 each of Gujarat and Karnataka and 4 of Uttar Pradesh.

(ii) Non-formal Education: Ninety per cent assistance is released for running of Non-Formal Education Centres for girls in the 10 educationally backward states.

(iii) Adult Education: Specific steps taken to enlarge coverage of women in adult education programme include:—

— Mobilisation of women learners in large numbers for ensuring enrolment of at least 50 per cent women in adult education centres;

—appointment of large numbers of women adult education functionaries such as Instructors and Preraks, even by relaxing the minimum qualifications;

—involvement of a large number of voluntary agencies, especially those working for women;

—more attention by Shramik Vidyapeeths to women workers;

—special orientation and training of women Instructors as effective agents for promoting women's equality;

—provision of opportunities for retention of literacy skills and application of learning for improving their living conditions;

—involvement of Central and State Social Welfare Boards with adult education programme; and

—production of films on female literacy and empowerment and their telecast through Doordarshan.

(b) According to information received from State Governments and Union Territory Administrations, 221 16 lakh women were enrolled under adult education programme during the VII Five Year Plan (upto 31-12-89). A statement showing the statewise enrolment during this period is attached.